

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 19-24 will be active in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Instructions are given in the attached to label Figure 4 of the drawings as representing prior art responsive to item 2 of the Official Action.

The claims have been amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which applicants regard as their invention and to do so using appropriate claim terminology with reference to the specification as well as antecedent basis for claim terms employed. For convenience a new set of claims has been provided. Claims 19-23 are based upon previous claims 1-5 and the subject matter of claim 6, wherein the electrode is coated with a slurry containing a hydrogen absorbing alloy. New claim 24 replaces previous claim 18. It is submitted that the new claims presented above are free of the objections noted by the examiner in item 3 of the Official Action, thus favorable consideration of these claims is requested.

Items 4 and 5 of the Official Action relate to a rejection directed towards claim 18 in which the examiner asserts that the claim is anticipated by U.S. patent 4,172,319 to Bloom. The rejection is traversed particularly with regard to the amended claims presented above.

The invention includes a procedure for applying a slurry comprising a hydrogen absorbing alloy powder, a water-soluble binder such as polyethylene oxide (PEO) and a solvent for the binder, preferably water (see the discussion on page 33, lines 5-10).

As described in the specification, when the electrode, on which a slurry including a hydrogen absorbing alloy as an active material is coated, is dried, a water-soluble binder and a solvent (for example, water) for the water-soluble binder migrate towards the surfaces of the electrode (active material) so that the binder is solidified. As a consequence, the amount of the water-soluble binder contained in the active material

layer close to the core plate may be reduced, and this allows adhesion between the core plate and the active material to be weakened and the active material becomes easy to separate out from the core plate; see the discussion in the first paragraph of page 7 of the specification.

According to the present invention, after drying, solvent for the water-soluble binder is again applied to the dried electrode. The solvent again applied to the now dried electrode will infiltrate into the active material layer. The binder solidified at surface of the electrode is again dissolved with the solvent, so that the above problems (weakening of the adhesion of the active material to the core plate) are solved.

The procedures allow applicants to employ the techniques which serve to mitigate problems associated with drying, especially high temperature drying, of the slurry coating; see the discussions on page 9 of applicants' specification.

Turning next to the disclosures of the prior art, the examiner directs attention to column 13, lines 33-42 (claim 1 of this patent) describing the preparation of a triplex laminate. It specifically mentions dissolving an adhesive binder in an organic solvent, coating, removing the solvent, etc. This is not what applicants claim.

Relevant information also appears in column 3 of this document which after quick review will make it apparent that the procedures described in this document are not pertinent to applicants' claims. Electrode dispersions are referred to with some particularity in column 3, lines 27-37 – the examiner will note that there is no mention of hydrogen absorbing alloys or their use in preparing electrode dispersions.

More significant is the fact that the patentees specifically require the use of an organic solvent "It has been found essential to use an organic solvent to prepare the electrode slurry, because an aqueous slurry, while readily coated will, upon drying, cause ... distortion ...". In this passage, the patentees are clearly instructing the reader to use organic solvents and to avoid aqueous slurry. This goes directly contrary to the claims of the present application in which a water-soluble binder is used in conjunction with a suitable solvent for it. Accordingly, there is no anticipation of claim 18, now replaced by

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claim 24, or any of the other claims now in the application for review. Indeed, these claims are submitted to be directed to patentable subject matter. Reconsideration and favorable action are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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